

HO 16.1 Timesaving Tips for Tackling Your Healthy Eating Goals

Here are some timesaving tips for each of the six healthy eating goals.

Balancing Calories

- Cooking, cleaning your kitchen, and food shopping are all activities that not only can increase your healthy eating opportunities but also increase your daily physical activity!
- Cook with enthusiasm. Clean your workspace as you go. Shop for food at a quick pace. Using baskets instead of carts can also increase your workload. You'll save time and burn calories!
- Take time to plan your meals and structured activities for the week. Keep a wipe-off calendar on your refrigerator to remind you of your plans. Although this may seem like a big task, getting organized and planning ahead will save you time in the long run and ensure that important tasks get done!

Increasing Fruits and Vegetables

- Save small amounts of leftover vegetables to use in soups and casseroles or to add to sandwiches.
- When using canned fruits and vegetables, save whatever you don't use in small paper cups, cover with plastic wrap, and freeze for later use.
- Keep a supply of dried vegetables on hand for quick additions to side or main dishes.
- Use an egg slicer to quickly slice mushrooms and other soft vegetables.
- To avoid cutting onions, garlic, peppers, and other spices and vegetables every time you cook, chop up a large batch at one time and freeze or blend with other spices in a food processor or blender, freeze in ice cube trays, and keep in zipped bags in your freezer.
- Bagged salads and other convenience items (precut fruits and vegetables, coleslaw mix) are readily available in most supermarkets today. You may pay more for these, but you will probably save money in the long run if you tend to let fresh vegetables spoil before you get around to chopping and preparing them.
- Potatoes and sweet potatoes can be baked or microwaved for quick and easy snacks or meals.
- Add dried fruits (raisins, cherries, cranberries) to cereal, yogurt, and muffins or quick breads.
- Fresh and canned fruits (packed in water or juice) are nature's fast food. Take them with you when you're on the go for quick and healthy snacks.
- Frozen fruits and vegetables offer a good option for produce in the winter months and for people who tend not to use the fresh produce that they buy before it spoils. Look for plain vegetables, or those in low-fat sauces, and fruits that are unsweetened or in their own juices.

HO 16.1 Timesaving Tips for Tackling Your Healthy Eating Goals

Increasing Dairy and Dairy Alternatives

- Single servings of low-fat milk, including chocolate milk, provide a convenient source of calcium.
- Try low-fat yogurt for a snack. Drinkable varieties are now available so that you can take them when you're on the run.
- Low-fat cheeses that are individually wrapped are quick snacks. Try packing them with whole-grain, high-fiber crackers for a satisfying snack. Slice low-fat varieties of block cheeses, wrap individual slices in plastic wrap, and store in the freezer for easy retrieval and use. This'll allow you to eat your cheese before it gets moldy.
- Shred an entire block of cheese at one time and store in your refrigerator or freezer.

Increasing Whole Grains

- Whole-grain, high-fiber cereals can be a great snack. Fill plastic bags with cereals that come in bite-sized pieces, store in your kitchen, and grab when you're in a hurry.
- Microwave low-fat popcorn is a healthy snack that takes less than 5 minutes to prepare.
- Be adventurous with your grains! Couscous is a grain that cooks in 5 minutes.
- Cook large quantities of whole-grain pastas and brown rice ahead of time. Store in plastic bags in your refrigerator or freezer and reheat in your microwave before serving.
- Look for ready-made whole-grain tortilla shells or pizza crusts. Top with low-fat cheese, vegetables, and lean meats for a quick and healthy pizza.
- You can find whole-grain bagels and waffles in most supermarket freezer or refrigerator sections. Toast and top with light cream cheese, syrup, or fresh fruit for a fast breakfast or snack.
- Single-serving oatmeal packages require little more than the addition of water and heat. You can take these (with a container) for a quick snack or meal when you're in a hurry.

Decreasing Unhealthy Fats and Added Sugars

- Use nonstick cooking spray to coat pans. Not only will it save you time, but it'll also save you fat and calories.
- Invest in nonstick cookware (pots, pans, baking sheets, casserole dishes). You'll eliminate the need for coating cooking and baking surfaces.
- Marinate meats (lean beef, chicken, fish) in plastic bags; then you can just throw away the bag when you're ready to cook. Try mixing up your own marinade with olive oil, vinegar (balsamic, apple cider, red wine), a little wine or spirits, and a pinch of herbs or spices.
- Grill, bake, or pan-fry (with nonstick cooking spray) several chicken breasts, pork chops, or fish fillets. Cool and wrap individually in plastic wrap, place in large zipped bags, and keep in the freezer. They can easily be defrosted and added to salads, casseroles, or soups.

HO 16.1 Timesaving Tips for Tackling Your Healthy Eating Goals

- Use imitation butter sprays for a quick, low-fat, low-calorie topping on vegetables, popcorn, and rolls.
- Look for individual servings of low-fat dressings and dips that can be taken in lunches and served with salads or vegetables. You can also buy small plastic containers and portion out your own servings.
- Add flavor and flair to vegetables and breads with a quick sprinkle of fresh herbs such as rosemary or thyme.
- Keep a few cans of tuna (packed in water) and salmon in your cupboard. Open the can and add low-fat mayo, cream cheese, and spices for use in salads, sandwiches, and casseroles.
- Buy sugar-free or low-calorie beverages to have on hand when you're in a hurry.
- Buy fruits canned in water or natural juice so you don't have to cut up fruit when you are short on time.
- Skip the sugar in your coffee or tea.

Decreasing Sodium and Salt

- Buy low- or no-sodium canned goods so that you don't have to rinse them before using to remove much of the sodium and salt.
- Skip condiments on your foods such as mustard, dressings, and pickles.
- Use precut vegetables rather than canned.
- Mix up or buy a low-sodium seasoning blend that you like and keep it in a container that's easy to use when you want to add flavor to foods.
- Cook a large portion of fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, rather than buying processed meats that are higher in sodium, and divide into containers to use during the week.